

MAKING IT HAPPEN

ACC seeks balance in expeditionary posture

By Capt. Heather Blackwell
Air Combat Command, A6OK

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. — Air Combat Command is leading a major transformation in the way the Air Force deploys its expeditionary communicators.

This transformation is fueled by multiple reasons including major manpower cuts in the comm and info career fields, and ground-breaking efforts aimed at increasing efficiencies within deployable communications.

MANPOWER CUTS

ACC is leading a task force focused on retooling the expeditionary communications community to meet these future challenges. The task force will seek out and take full advantage of efficiencies within expeditionary communications and information forces. It will also ensure EC&I forces are postured to evolve as the Air Force matures its Air Force Network Operations concept of operations. With the impending consolidation efforts of base network control centers and Network Operations and Security Centers, and with the implementation of the Warfighting Headquarters construct, the expeditionary communications workforce must adapt its skill sets accordingly. In developing these skill sets, it's imperative to find a balance between supporting an enabling force and supporting a sustaining force.

THE FUTURE

New demands, coupled with the Air Force's push to treat the network as a weapon system, call for a bold initiative to launch deployable communications into the

IN THE COMMAND



- ▶ **An ACC task force is focusing on retooling the expeditionary comm community.**
- ▶ **The implementation of IP-based packages will potentially reduce the manpower required to set up and maintain equipment.**
- ▶ **ACC is standardizing the way expeditionary communicators deploy by defining roles and responsibilities for each organization.**

net-centric warfare future. Expeditionary communicators will be tasked to get the warfighter connected to a common global network and enable net-centric operations.

To accomplish these requirements, the Air Force's expeditionary communications community has established an initiative to migrate its deployable packages to an IP-based platform. The Air Force is using the "Everything over Internet Protocol," or EoIP, framework established by the Air Force Special Operations Command as the foundation for its conversion to an IP-based construct.

Additionally, a successful precedent has been set by Central Air Force via theater-wide implementation of Voice over Secure IP and Radio over IP. The migration of the expeditionary communications program to IP involves the convergence of voice and data networks and the transition to IP-based satellite communications networks. The implementation of these IP-based packages will potentially reduce the manpower required to set up and maintain the equipment. Additionally, a converged network will require less equipment and thus decrease the footprint in a deployed environment. Lastly, the transition to an IP standard will increase joint interoperability that is critical to operating in today's environment.

STANDARDIZATION

In addition to the efficiencies gained by realignment and technological advances, the Air Force is standardizing the way its communicators are deployed. The task force established by SAF/XCI and chaired by ACC is chartered to develop a construct for deployment. This will be done by standardizing how the expeditionary community is postured to deploy and by specifically defining roles and responsibilities for each organization in the expeditionary communications community. **Additionally, this task force will develop a resource model driven by the requirements levied through capabilities-based planning, Air Force CONOPS, Adaptive Plans and the National Military Strategy.** These requirements will be aligned with resources in the expeditionary communications inventory to ensure all equipment and manpower is postured appropriately.